



Habitat Partner Family

Habib Habib & Folla Zaky



Habib & Folla are from a small Egyptian village located near the larger town of El Minya. Folla is the only daughter out of five children and describes her mother as her best friend. She fondly remembers helping the women in her community make bread. "It was my favorite thing because we all gathered together," she says. Habib was only 9 months old when he became crippled after an acute illness. "It never bothered me very much," he says. He loved joining in as goalie when his friends played soccer. He also became talented at playing cards, checkers and dominoes, and he often

played with Folla's brother at their home, which is how the couple met. They became engaged in 2008, and shortly after Habib's friend submitted an application for Habib to the U. S. Diversity Immigrant Visa Program (commonly called the Green Card Lottery). Habib's name was picked in 2009, just months after their marriage.

In 2010, Habib and Folla arrived in Nashville where others from their hometown were living. It was their first trip out of Egypt, their first time on an airplane. It has been a challenging transition, especially for Folla. She gave birth to their daughter Mairam, 4, just a few months after arriving, and is now also the mother of son, Shenouda, 2. Folla wishes she had the support of her family back home, especially her mother. She says she loves everything about living in the U.S., especially being able to buy any food she wants, but adds, "If my family were here, I'd be in heaven." Habib loves that he's able to work and have a car here, things he wasn't able to accomplish in Egypt. Habib works for Goodwill and Folla works at SMS Holdings. When they have free time, they enjoy taking their children to the park and playing on the swings. Habib says, "When you see the kids smiling and giggling, that's what makes the parents happy."

The family lives in a two-bedroom apartment and say they have a bug problem. And the apartment lacks handicap accessibility features. One of Habib's co-workers told him about the Habitat homeownership program. "Financially it's the best choice for us with a low income," Habib explains. Their friend Heba, who has helped Habib and Folla as a translator and advocate throughout their Habitat process, says the family wouldn't be able to afford homeownership without Habitat. Habib and Folla are both excited because homeownership will give them more freedom. They can't wait for their children to be able to finally play outside safely. "We're very thankful to our sponsors and volunteers," Habib says. Folla adds, "In Egypt, we always say, 'God grant you many years'. You're making our dreams come true. Thank you."